



OUR MISSION

CASA of Santa Cruz County advocates for children and youth, providing court appointed volunteers so each child and youth in the foster and Juvenile Court systems feels cared for and connected with the people, families, and resources they need to heal and flourish into adulthood.

OUR VISION

That all children are nurtured in the hearts and homes of safe and loving families.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

We pledge to take action to reduce our individual, our agency, and community implicit biases that contribute to systemic inequities. We will seek to create spaces of authenticity and opportunities to foster relationships that earn trust. We, the staff and the board of directors, will collectively commit to and hold ourselves accountable to advocate for transformational diversity, equity, and inclusion policies and practices internally, in collaboration with community partners, and in our work with families and youth.

Dear Friends,

This past financial year has been an amazing time of significant change and growth. By the end of 2022, thanks to your support, we significantly solidified our financial foundations. In early 2023, once we had several large multi-year grants and donations in hand, the Board and staff made the bold decision to fully launch two new programs.

We are forever grateful for the unwavering support we have received from our community which enabled all this growth.

One of the exciting new programs is the creation of our Juvenile Justice Program. We now have several staff entirely dedicated to training and supervising volunteer Advocates matched 1:1 with justice-involved youth. In the last quarter of the past financial year, we doubled the number of justice-involved youth served and we have the capacity to continue to grow.

We are also thrilled to announce the establishment of our Community Council, a group of committed individuals who were under the supervision of the juvenile court system. They are truly an amazing group that are passionate about our mission and dedicated to identifying system barriers and advocating for the rights and needs of foster and justice-involved youth.

As we look ahead to the future, we are excited to continue our work and make an even greater impact in the lives of the children and youth we serve. Thank you for being part of this journey. We're excited to build a brighter future with you.

With thanks.





Lynne Petrovic Executive Director

Sharen Hoffman- Many



Sharon Hoffman-Manning **Board President**

CASA:

A Foundation of Advocacy A Beacon of Hope

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) are trained volunteers who dedicate between approximately 10 to 15 hours a month to help foster children and youth in need of support. CASAs are caring adults, assigned to the same child or youth during their time in the foster care or juvenile justice system, even if the child's caregivers, schools, and other situations change. CASAs work together with a child's family of origin, foster family, social workers, attorneys, educators, therapists, probation officer, and CASA program staff to build a long-term support network. They help children and youth plan for a future that's more hopeful than their past.

After a thorough background check and training, CASAs are sworn in by a Santa Cruz County Dependency Court judge. Once matched, they advocate for a child or youth and their family, with ongoing supervision from CASA staff. CASAs bring a unique dedication to children, families, and our community. They recognize that reducing recidivism for justice-involved youth and increasing permanency for foster children is essential for well-being, they work to reunite families, when safe and possible, and they keep children connected to their cultural identity and family of origin.

"I volunteer because no child should ever feel alone or lost in the child welfare system. Foster care can be difficult and scary for a child. They need to know they have someone in their corner, someone looking out for their best interest. It has been the best volunteer experience of my life."

- DAVID H., CASA VOLUNTEER



TAKE ACTION to ensure the safety and well-being of the child or youth,

SHARE THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD OR YOUTH with other

Every child and youth needs a champion to appreciate them, support them, build up their confidence, and encourage them to pursue their dreams. Every



Spotlight: Advocating for Infants

Many people wonder how it is possible to advocate for an infant who is unable to speak and share their needs. One such person was volunteer Advocate Ellen Ferguson, who was asked to advocate for a newborn and her 18-month-old sister in 2018.

Ellen quickly found out that working with infants and toddlers was not just about advocating for their best interests, but also supporting their caregivers. Ellen worked with both the resource families (the aunties caring for the children) and the birth parents, who were working toward reunification.

Since CASA Advocates are only allowed to visit with infants under the age of 3 in the presence of their caregivers, building trust with these caregivers was key. Ellen wanted to assure them that she was a valuable asset rather than a critic, to meet them wherever they were at, and show respect for their culture. She became a resource and frequently asked what they needed. She visited the babies, played with them, and

monitored their progress in their homes.

Ellen focused on modeling positive interactions with the babies, suggested educational content in the household, and offered practical assistance such as diapers, cribs, car seats, highchairs, and blankets. Ellen arranged dance and swim lessons, encouraged bilingualism, and provided resources for proper nutrition. She supported the resource parents by suggesting local preschools and actively engaged with social workers and public nurses to ensure the children received necessary care, including physical and speech therapy.

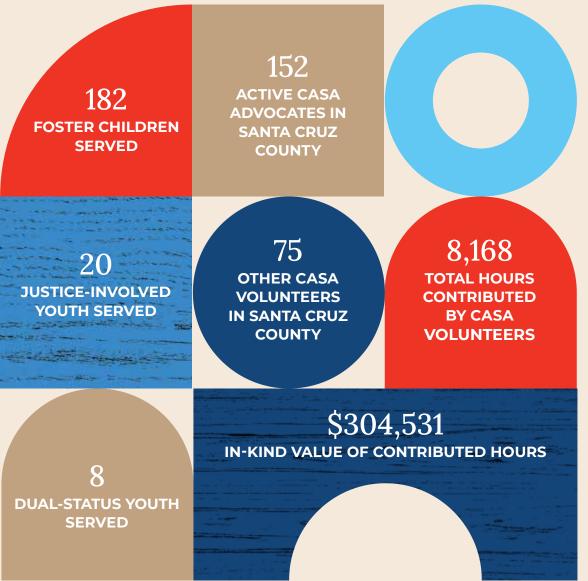
The outcome of Ellen's advocacy was profoundly positive. The infants thrived and were adopted by their aunt and uncle. She has since advocated for a second newborn, who after living with his aunt, was reunited with his father permanently. Ellen was a key resource in the transition between the two families, with two different languages and cultures, ensuring that the child's best interests were at the forefront.

Building a Stable Future

Matching advocates to a child or youth needing support can provide a transformative experience, shaping their future. Advocates offer guidance, mentorship, and emotional support, helping them navigate challenges. With a trusted role model, these children develop resilience, self-esteem, and essential life skills.

The positive influence of an advocate empowers them to overcome obstacles, pursue education, and aspire for a successful future, leading to healthier, more fulfilling lives.

CASA BY THE NUMBERS



CASA OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

FY2022/2023 IMPACT REPORT

5

The Need: Juvenile Justice

By Juvenile Court Judge, Jerry Vinluan

When I was assigned to the juvenile court in March 2023, I felt fortunate to find CASA working one-on-one with justice-involved youth, ensuring they feel heard and valued. I strongly believe to be effective in helping reintegrate these kids, it is important to approach them with empathy and compassion.

To understand their situations better, I've pulled upon the insights gained from my work as a former defense attorney and even wore an ankle monitor to understand the youth firsthand. And I've learned that these youth, despite their past actions, are not inherently bad. They may have had a bad day and done something they regret, but they deserve our understanding and a chance to successfully reintegrate into society. Addressing the needs of these youths, helping them understand their own agency and value, is crucial so that they can get back on the right path.

This is why I am so incredibly grateful to have CASA working with justice-involved youth. I have seen the effects of having a CASA when I talk to the youth in court; their lives change dramatically just by knowing that someone is there for them, that supports them, that they can depend on, that they may not have had otherwise. In fact, through the CASA Juvenile Justice pilot, we observed a significant decrease in subsequent arrests for youth with a CASA and a four-fold increase in self-efficacy, highlighting their indispensable impact.

With CASA as an integral part of our care team, we are better equipped to make well-informed decisions about the futures of these young individuals. Their integration into our system represents a crucial step toward a more compassionate and effective juvenile justice approach.

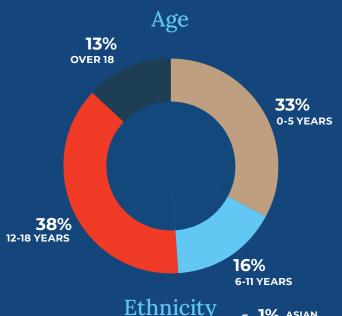
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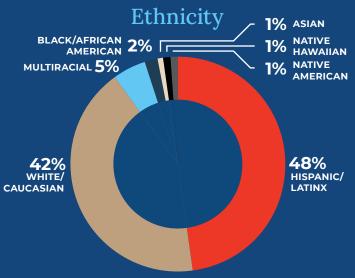
JUSTICE-**INVOLVED YOUTH ASSIGNED AN ADVOCATE HAVE** A...

> 50% **REDUCTION IN RECIDIVISM**

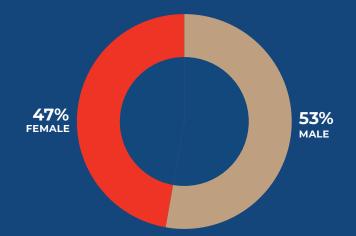
300% **INCREASE IN SELF-EFFICACY**

WHO WE SERVE





Gender





How to Help Children and Youth

for children in foster care and the juvenile court

By contributing, you make a direct and positive impact on the lives of vulnerable youth, helping to build

MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION, a

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SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT CASA to your

Financial Summary

Statement of Financials (Accrual Basis)

REVENUES	FY 2022-2023	FY 2021-2022
Individuals Donations*	\$945,509	\$463,151
Private Grants*	\$805,573	\$153,077
Government Grants*	\$377,589	\$362,724
Fundraising Events	\$248,345	\$236,682
Miscellaneous Income [†]	\$397,486	\$0
Total Revenue:	\$2,774,502	\$1,215,634

*Multiple-year grants and donations are recorded in full,

[†]One-time, post Covid-19 Employee Retention Credit

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$1,377,784	\$1,325,30
General & Administrative	\$149,398	\$142,228
Fundraising	\$132,799	\$126,250
Total Expenses:	\$1,659,981	\$1,593,78



advocacy of the children and youth we serve.



With Thanks

VOLUNTEER ADVOCATES,

CASA of Santa Cruz County volunteers must be over 21 years of age and come from all over the county. They represent a wide range of backgrounds, ethnicities, and experiences, but all have an amazing capacity to care. They are truly community heroes, consistently showing up and being committed to the best outcome for a child's future.

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*As of 6/30/2023

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With Thanks

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CASA of Santa Cruz County values all donors and appreciates every one of them for giving what they can to our organization. These individuals, businesses, foundations, and government agencies make our work possible and enable us to expand to serve more youth in the community. The following donors provided a monetary or in-kind gift of \$100 or more in our 2022-2023 Financial Year. We are full of gratitude.

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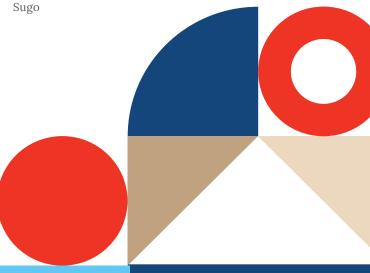
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Our monthly donors provide helps us better manage our program while decreasing administrative costs. Stable funding makes a tremendous difference in our ability to match youth to advocates.

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Since 1989, the Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority (the Thetas) has supported CASA as its chosen philanthropy organization at the national level and across the hundreds of chapters across the country. Locally, we are so very fortunate to have built a strong relationship with the Thetas at UCSC. They volunteer year-round, helping with events, care packages for the children and youth, office work, and even helping with our social media. And, they have been an amazing fundraising team at our annual Move for CASA. We are so happy to have the Thetas as part of the team!









EVENTS

Imagine 2022







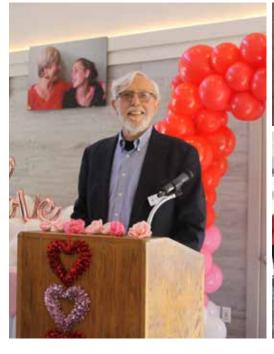




We celebrated 30 Years of Believing in Youth on September 10, 2022 at Sesnon House, Cabrillo College. It was a very festive day in community, with youth performances by El Sistema and Activities for All. We heard from former foster youth with whom we've worked with over the past 30 years and celebrated their bright futures. Our delicious full-course dinner was prepared and served by the student chefs at Cabrillo College. Our live auction and raffle was action packed as always, and we even exceeded our fundraising goals for the event.

For the Love of Children Luncheon

For the first time in 3 years, this past Februrary, we held the For the Love of Children Luncheon, hosted by the Friends of CASA, benefiting the CASA Children's Fund. It was wonderful to gather together in person and raise awareness about CASA and the importance of our work.







Move for CASA





Joined by CASA of Monterey
County, we held our 3rd annual
Move for CASA the first Saturday in May. We had a fantastic walk, despite the threat of rain, at Elkhorn Slough. This free event raised almost \$20,000 in participant fundraising!

Volunteer Appreciation Picnic

We expressed our gratitude for our volunteer Advocates, Board of Directors, Friends of CASA, and interns at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic in early summer. We were fortunate to have a beautiful sunny day at Delaveaga Park with great food and drink, games for the kids, and lots and fantastic company! The event served not only as a celebration of our dedicated volunteers' hard work and commitment but also as an opportunity to strengthen our community bonds.













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